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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 33 | Min 18 | Humidity 35% Mainly clear sky Sensex 54,550 | Nifty 16,630 | Gold 52,743 | Silver 70,199 | Dollar 76.53 | Euro 83.85 | GBP 101.17

SKI HIGH

PAGE 3

PROTEST HALTED

PAGE 4

250 blood samples of strays from 18 wards in north and south reveal only 50% of previously vaccinated canines still had rabies antibodies

THE DOG-MATRIX

Notch in ear doesn't necessarily mean 'rabies-free'

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's fight against rabies just got tougher. While the Palike has been focusing on a carefully planned regime of capture-vaccinate-neuter-notch-release, now the civic body is in a catch-22 of sorts.

According to a study by the Veterinary College, Bengaluru, carried out in association with Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE), a sizeable number of vaccinated street dogs in the city do not have adequate rabies antibody titre in their blood. Simply put, the telltale notch in the ear does not insinuate that the dog in question is indeed 'rabies-free'.

Researchers collected a total of 250 blood samples from free-roaming strays from 18 different wards of north and south Bengaluru. The results showed that only 50% of the dogs had adequate rabies Virus Neutralising Antibodies (VNA) titre.

Strays in the city were previously vaccinated by the animal welfare organisations during 2017–2018 with the Raksharab vaccine supplied by the BBMP.

"VNA is the measure of the immunity level of a dog against the rabies virus. We conducted the study to ascertain the success of vaccination drives in the city against rabies.

> **"Looking at other metros in the country, Bengaluru is faring well...**
>
> — Dr Shrikrishna Isloor, dept of microbiology, Veterinary College

We examined the seroconversion in free-ranging dogs, and it turned out that only 50% of the canines that have received vaccination for rabies had immunity against the virus," said Dr Shrikrishna Isloor, department of microbiology, Veterinary College, Bengaluru.

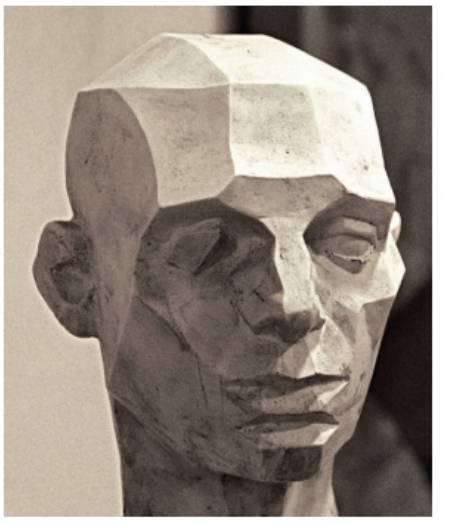
The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends at least 70% of the dog population should exhibit adequate VNA to achieve herd immunity. Experts said the situation in Bengaluru is worrisome.

"The situation is alarming. Our result implies that a big proportion of the total dog population in the city is still not protected against rabies. However, it is difficult to deduce this number as there are many lacunae. Neither we know the total dog population in the city, nor are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

Head Stats

'India is traumatic brain injury capital; countless patients suffer each year'



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Traumatic brain injury has been one of the leading factors leading to death or disability in India as not much advances have been made in treating and managing TBI till date in the country.

Now, experts from various states including Karnataka have proposed national guidelines for the management of traumatic brain injury.

Members from the Neurotrauma Society of India said that amongst the various types of injuries, traumatic brain injury (TBI) is high up there, resulting in a significant number of deaths, hospitalisations, disabilities alongside socio-economic losses.

According to the National Mortality Survey for traumatic brain injury (TBI) in India, 500,000 deaths, 30,000,000 admissions and 100,000,000 minor cases have been reported so far.

"India has, unfortunately, become the TBI capital of the world, and countless patients suffer from such an injury each

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 Press play

The pandemic restricted children to indoor activities for two years. Let your children come out of their shells with Summer Express, an in-person theatre workshop!
Where: Ranga Shankara
When: April and May
Details: Drop by Ranga Shankara

02 Art attack

Hobby Station is hosting fun art classes to teach children between five and nine years of age how to draw and colour. All that the participants will need are a good internet connection, pencils, colours, paper and their powerful imagination. These lessons will also focus on teaching children the differences between primary and secondary colours.
Where: Zoom
Register: bookmyshow.com

03 Sing Holi, Holi, Holi

To make your Holi even better, Ekatvam is bringing colour and music together at the Ekatvam Holi Music Fest 2022. Twelve concerts from upcoming and renowned artists will enthral you with their genius. So, seek the colour in music and the music in colour.
Where: March 18-20
Where: Bangalore Gayana Samaja
Register: Bookmyshow

Don't hold it in, ladies

Many women fear contracting infections when it comes to using public toilets; many prefer to hold it in. But is it advisable? BM asks doctors

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Many women will relate to the fear of contracting infections while using public toilets. The fear is real; most hold their pee for hours to avoid using a shared restroom in a public place. Unfortunately, this preventive measure is unhelpful as it can increase the risk of infection, doctors said.

Dr Varini N, senior consultant, obstetrician and gynaecologist, Milann Fertility and Birthing Hospital, said public toilets are home to many bacteria, viruses and other bugs (arthropods like ticks and lice). So the fear of contracting UTIs here is a legitimate concern.

"Dirty toilets and poor personal hygiene can be sources of many infections, including urinary tract infections (UTIs), vaginal infections, gastro-enteritis and skin infections like herpes and fungal infections. It is not just toilet seats that harbour these organisms; door handles, toilet paper, flush tanks, water hoses, valve handles, sink, liquid and solid soap, tissues and electrical driers may also be contaminated with disease-causing organisms," the doctor said.

So while public toilets could be a source of infection, contracting them only by public toilets is less likely.

"Women with weaker immunity due to diabetes, post-menopausal stress, those on immunosuppressant medicines or immunodeficiency syndrome, are more likely to contract infections from public toilets. Other causes of infection could be poor intake of fluids and poor hygiene," Dr Varini said.

Women often opt to squat over the seats without touching them

> **"Make sure you do not hold your urine and continue to drink plenty of water to flush out the urine. Avoid touching surfaces in public restrooms**
> – Dr Prathima Reddy, SPARSH Hospital for Women and Children

Dr Sapna Raina, senior consultant, obstetrics and gynaecology, Narayana Health City, said the anatomy of the male and female body differs. "In women, the urethral opening is very close to the vagina as well as the anus, which makes it easy for bacteria to travel into the urethra and bladder, causing infection. Even the distance from the urethral opening to the bladder is less in women compared to men. Once a female gets UTI, 25 to 30 per cent have recurrent infection within six months, especially if diabetic."

The doctor said repeated UTIs can cause permanent kidney damage from acute or chronic kidney infection, renal abscess, papillary necrosis and so on. Urethral strictures can occur causing difficulty in passing urine. If pregnant, UTI can lead to preterm labour and low birth weight babies. "Sepsis can occur if UTI is untreated... in turn it can cause multi-organ dysfunction and shock."

Dr Raina said some tend to wipe the toilet seat with paper before use, while some hover over it in a semi-squat posture without touching the toilet and some even carry devices that help them stand and pee. "Most women often make the other common-sense choice of holding their pee until they get home which may not be advisable. Holding it in could often be more of a cause of urinary infections."

Dr Prathima Reddy, director and lead consultant, department of obstetrics and gynaecology, SPARSH Hospital for Women and Children, said "The infection does not get transmitted directly due to use of toilets. If the toilet is clean and there is a separate seat cover in the western-style toilet it surely helps and gives a sense of cleanliness and hygiene. Using seat sanitizers or other products does not necessarily reduce the risk. Make sure you do not hold your urine and continue to drink plenty of water to flush out the urine. Avoid touching surfaces in public toilets. Half standing while peeing may also help. Lastly, wipe afterwards... Wipe from front to back and not the other way around. Using tissues available in public toilets may not be very hygienic," she said.

Risk factors for UTI

Further, Dr Raina said many pregnant women have trouble emptying their bladder because a womb with a developing baby sits on top of the bladder during pregnancy. Leftover urine with bacteria in it can cause a UTI.

After menopause, vaginal tissue becomes thin and dry. This can make it easier for harmful bacteria to grow and cause a UTI. Sexual activity can also move germs that cause UTI from other areas, such as the vagina, to the urethra.

If you have diabetes, which can weaken your immune system, it can cause nerve damage that makes it hard to completely empty your bladder.

Using a diaphragm for birth control or use of spermicides (creams that kill sperm) with a diaphragm or with condoms can cause infection too.

Symptoms

Dysuria, painful micturition, increased urinary urgency and frequency, sensation of bladder fullness or lower abdominal discomfort, lower abdominal tenderness, flank pain, bloody urine, fever, chills and malaise are symptoms of UTIs that require a doctor's consultation.

Managing neurotrauma in India

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

year. The government is simply unable to deal with this growing silent epidemic. The importance of the magnitude of the problem due to TBI in India has always been underestimated due to the lack of proper research and good quality data. The level of care that patients with TBI receive in India is extremely variable. A plausible reason is the lack of established standards or verification of trauma care hospitals or systems," said an expert from Bengaluru who is a member of the Neurotrauma Society of India.

While India is still lagging behind, other countries have done well in bringing down TBI mortality. In the United States it decreased from 51% in 1977 to around 20-30% now. Though medication is an important aspect of treatment, the significant improvement that country has done is to bring in full time specialists, education, verified trauma systems, better monitoring of critically ill patients, TBI rehabilitation among other measures.

However currently, in India, there are no established protocols for pre-hospital care, patient triage and treatment at different levels of hospitals or continuing care for patients with TBI.

Therefore, the aforementioned team of doctors in collaboration with international experts took on the challenge of creating India-centric recommendations and culminated in a practical and usable tool — 'National Guidelines for the Management of Traumatic Brain Injury by the Neurotrauma Society of India and Neurological Society of India'.

"The purpose of the guidelines is to improve the entire spectrum of TBI care — from awareness and prevention to pre-hospital care, in-hospital care and finally, rehabilitation," said a professor from Bengaluru, part of the Neurotrauma Society of India.

Most hospitals that have neurological services do not take in TBI cases and refer elsewhere; the guidelines give advice on how to care for patients with such injuries. "The document is very useful and if adopted by surgeons in district hospitals and local governments, it is likely to bring a qualitative change in the management and outcome of head injuries," said the member.

The guidelines will be released on March 20 — the world head injury awareness day.

Record cycling feat stretches 24,000 km

Duo on mission to spread awareness on global warming cycled across 24 states, 4 UTs

While one wonders if it would be too much of a task to cycle back and from office, a duo from the city has pedalled 24,000 km across 24 states and four union territories.

Dhanush Manjunath, 23, was working in Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust (SAST) before he decided to quit his job to pursue his passion. Along with Hemanth YV, 24, a farmer from Chikka Tirupati, he decided to pedal around the country to spread awareness on global warming. Dhanush told Bangalore Mirror about the idea behind the mission. "We wanted to motivate people to take up cycling by showing that if we can cycle for several thousand kilometres, five to six km should be easy to manage," he said.

The duo left Bengaluru on July 11, 2021. He said on an average, they would cycle for 120 km a day. He spoke about the various challenges they faced. "For example, when we were cycling from Siliguri to Guwahati, it was raining continuously. So, for the next four days, we were drenched all the time and the first layer of skin was peeling off. Then, while cycling in Bihar to Delhi, we were out in 40-plus Celsius heat for days. During the ride to Darjeeling, it was a tough ascent for 36 km straight to climb to 7,400 feet. When in Himachal Pradesh, we were stuck in the snow and could not move ahead till the local administration supported us. In Saurashtra of Gujarat, the roads were so bad that it was tough to ride. In Tamil Nadu, we had strong headwinds. While cycling near Allagadda in Andhra Pradesh, I had eight punctures in a single day and another eight punctures for a single day near Ujjain."

The duo have now applied for a spot in the Guiness Book of records. "A lot of people and associations and companies have helped me in achieving this record and I want to thank all of them," he said.

—Sridhar Vivan

Dhanush M, Chikka Tirupati

Ski is the limit for B'luru champ

Young skier goes for gold at Gulmarg competition

Jiah got the gold medal in giant slalom under-16 girls event

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Bengaluru girl Jiah has bagged gold in giant slalom under -16 girls category in Alpine Ski race as part of the Amrit Jyoti Gulmarg Festival 2022 held in the first week of March. There were 13 participants in the race and the course was set by the Indian Army ski team coach who is an ex-Olympian.

Jiah is a resident of BEML Layout, Thubarahalli, Whitefield. As there is hardly any infrastructure for skiing in Bengaluru, Jiah had to head to Serbia for training and was trained by Janko Vukadinovic from Montenegro. Reaching Serbia was a tall task. As it was taking too much time for her to get a visa, her coach then decided to go to Kashmir to train Jiah. Her coach says that Jiah needs to be on snow practicing for at least nine months of the year so she has to move from place to place based on the snow condition. She was following the same routine like last year, starting her training from 9 am to 4 pm on slopes.

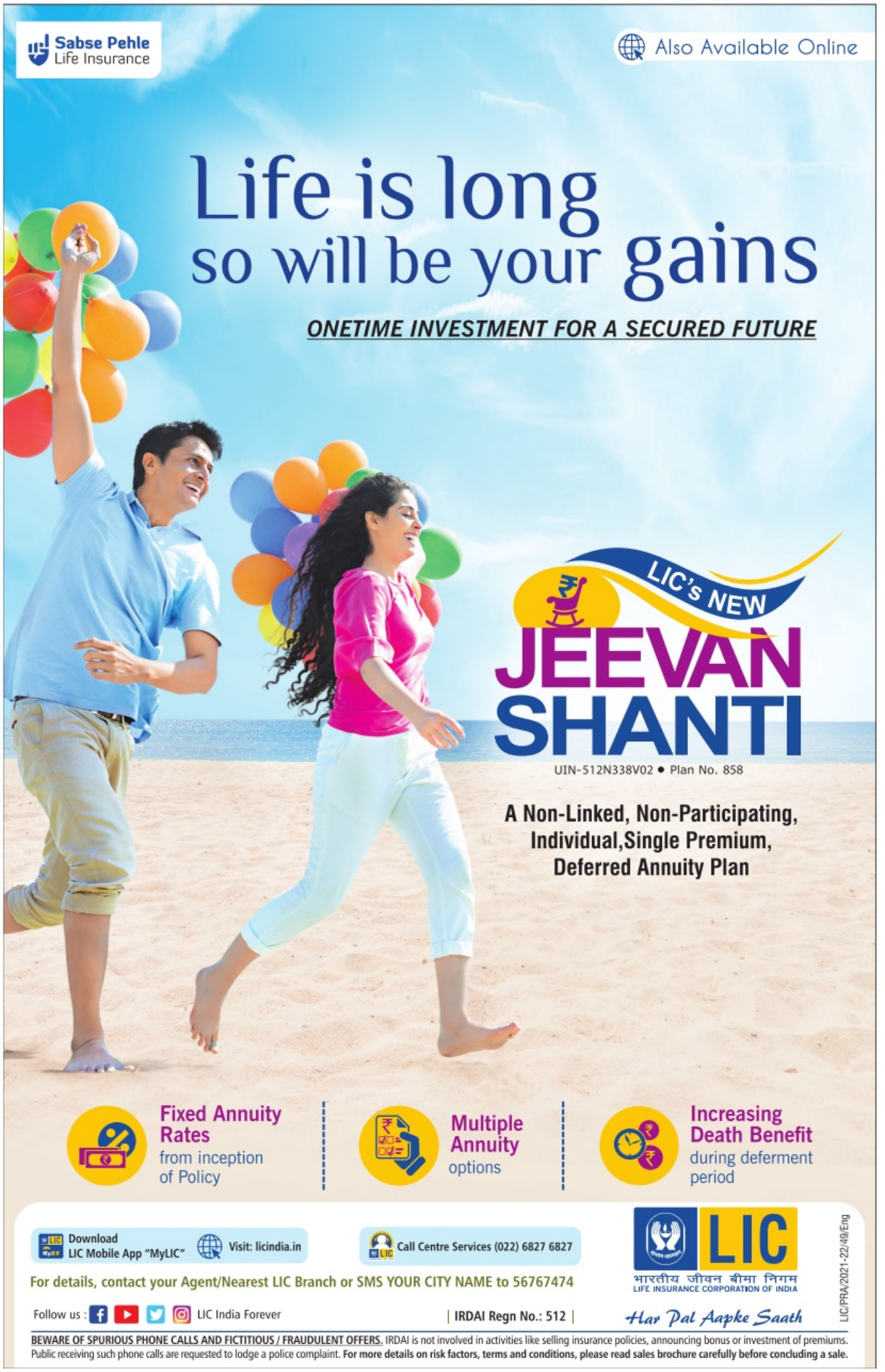
Jiah told Bangalore Mirror, "When we went to Serbia, my technique was below standard as per the coach as I never got to learn a new technique in India and it was very difficult to change my technique because it's all muscle memory. But my coach and I worked hard to correct the techniques. Earlier, I used to come back home and cry every day after the training because of the body pain but that did not stop me."

"I would come home after training and cry because of the body pain but that did not stop me

Ask Jiah how she juggles academics and sports and she tells you, it is with support from her school. "I have full support of my school Ryan International, Kundanahalli. My principal is in regular contact with me for updates on my progress. While training, I don't have have time to study but when I return to Bengaluru, I try to complete my syllabus. As I am good in academics, it is not too difficult for me to catch up with the backlog," she said.

Jiah says she loves skiing and her dream is to win a medal for India in the Olympics. She has to get trained and compete with International athletes who have excellent facilities. Currently, she is preparing for the next junior ski World cup. She is returning to Bengaluru on Monday as this year's Khelo India competition is not happening due to poor snow conditions in Kashmir.

Now, her next challenge is to work on her core strengthening and stamina building for a few months and then she will go to Europe for training based if financial situation of her parents permits.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You may protest, but only quietly and at Freedom Park

When 500 gathered at Sankey Tank to protest against unnecessary works, cops warned them against slogans and sent them to Freedom Park as per HC orders

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Residents staging a silent protest at Sankey Tank in Malleswaram

Roughly 500 had gathered to protest against the unnecessary construction work undertaken in Malleswaram without heeding the need to develop necessary amenities like public toilets and drinking water.

"There is large scale unnecessary work happening around Malleswaram. There is ongoing work at Sankey Tank and the work has also been extremely delayed. The 18th cross ground is also being developed and roots of the trees have been cut. We want all construction to be stopped," said Prashant, a resident.

"If you are not in a position to improve it, just don't destroy it. Without providing basic amenities, they are reducing the size of the ground with unnecessary work. Even with a heavy downpour, there is no water-logging. This is the only ground with a good green belt surrounding it. Walkers' lane is being developed all around the ground and roots of the trees have been chopped. The tree will fall today or tomorrow," said Swaroop, a regular user of the ground premises and Sankey Tank.

The peaceful protestors also met with cops who informed them about the High Court instructing all protestors to limit protest-related activities to Freedom Park.

"After last week's protest, the police security was heightened. Cops questioned why we were protesting and informed us that we needed to take permission. They were also recording our actions on their phones. We were also told that it's against the High Court order to protest outside Freedom Park. But once we explained our cause, we were allowed to protest but were warned against chanting slogans," said Prashanth.

Another resident pointed out, the protesters were not a political party and were simply walking peacefully in line when the police showed them a circular and told them that walking in a procession or holding a placard outside the designated protest area is illegal and they could be detained.

> **"The ongoing work at Sankey Tank has also been delayed extremely. The 18th Cross ground is also being developed**
>
> – Resident

"We were just creating awareness," said Nilesh, a frequent user of the premises.

"How can people from Jalahalli or Electronic City be expected to come to Freedom Park to protest? Even if we protest in Freedom Park no one will be bothered by our cause. We would like to address the issue where the problem exists," said Prashanth.

Pothole protests or roadside politics?

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Protesters gathered at Malleswaram on Sunday performing a pooja

Malleswaram witnessed a pothole pooja on Sunday. Residents hired a priest to perform a pooja so they may soon be free from potholes. They alleged the roads were dug up in an unscientific manner in the name of developmental works.

Anoop Iyengar, resident, said, "It is very difficult to walk or drive in Malleswaram due to potholes and bad roads. There have been a number of accidents and we request the authorities to fix the roads at the earliest."

However, minister Dr CN Ashwatha Narayana, who represents Malleswaram Assembly Constituency, is of the opinion that there are ulterior motives behind the politicised demonstrations in his constituency.

His allegations are a reaction to the demonstration performed on Sunday which claimed the works in the constituency were causing inconvenience to citizens.

"(They) could have done it openly by declaring their party's name by displaying the party's flag. Is it right to do so in the name of citizens?" he questioned.

"Every resident in the constituency knows very well how the situation in the constituency was 15 years ago and how it is (different) now. From scarcity of drinking water to a dilapidated underground drainage system and playgrounds being used as parking spaces... children could not play as they (the grounds) were reserved for exhibitions... The scenario has completely changed, " he said.

Minister Dr CN Ashwatha Narayana suspects protesters have ulterior motives

He said if this is the reality, the demonstration is anti-people. He added, UGD pipes in the constituency were 60 to 70 years old and were in a miserable condition.

"Wastewater could not flow through manholes... Now all these are being replaced in the entire constituency with new pipes and precast manholes. It is inevitable to dig up roads when any development work needs to be taken up. But, to avoid inconveniencing citizens they are being restored immediately," said the minister.

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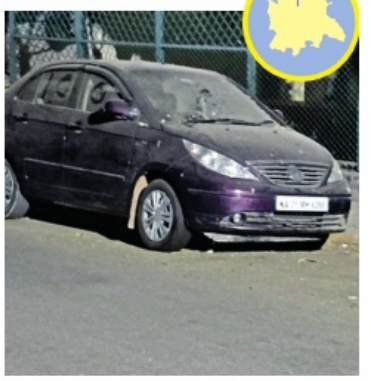

This car hasn't been moved an inch from this spot near HOPCOMS on 12th Cross. The authorities concerned must tow the vehicle.

Burning trouble
Indiranagar

People have been burning garbage, including plastic waste on 80 Feet Road near Anjaneya Temple. BBMP must take action against the miscreants.

Stop smoking
Yelahanka

Folks have been burning garbage behind Prestige Royal Gardens. The authorities concerned must put a stop to such illegal activities.

Flyover work stops, workers left in lurch

Ejipura flyover workers complain they haven't received their salaries for 7 months

Only 45 per cent work got completed since 2019

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

After the BBMP cancelled the contract with Simplex Infrastructure for Ejipura flyover construction, workers and contractors under the firm complained of pending dues since last August.

After missing multiple deadlines, BBMP scrapped the tender awarded to Simplex Infrastructure Ltd to build a flyover between Ejipura Main Road and Kendriya Sadan in Koramangala. With an estimated cost of Rs 204 crore, the project was started in 2017 with the deadline set for 2019. However, even after four years and nine months, the progress remains at less than 45 per cent.

The contractors were paid a total of Rs 75.11 crores until September last year. However, the money seems to not have trickled to the workers.

With the work order cancelled, workers are beginning to worry about their payment dues. Six workers have complained that they haven't received their salaries for seven months. The workers are staying at the facility provided by Simplex but are left with no money for other expenses. "We received an advance amount of Rs 20,000 (one month salary) in December. Since August, we haven't gotten any payment and it is pending till February. Simplex didn't even bother to inform us that the contract is cancelled," said Kolkata-based Nitai Ghosh, a plant operator working under Simplex.

They are unable to send money to their families residing in other States. A 30-year-old operator made similar complaints. "The sub-contractors are stating that we will get paid when they receive money from Simplex. Apart from the advance, we haven't received a single rupee since last August. I don't even have the required funds to return home or send any money home." said Mahadeb Kirtania, a concrete-mixing operator working under Simplex.

> **Apart from the advance amount, we haven't received a single rupee since last August. I don't even have the required money to return home**
>
> –Mahadeb Kirtania, worker

According to an inquiry conducted by the Karnataka division of All India Central Council of Trade Union (AICCTU), at least four more workers have come forward with similar complaints. In total, the pending dues amount to an estimated Rs 6,23,000. They also found that four other workers were forced to return to their hometowns with great difficulty. "Most of these workers are migrant labourers. They are not registered or signed with the company officially. They haven't been paid 6-7 months of salary. Meanwhile, Simplex officials are complaining that BBMP has not paid them since August. BBMP is claiming that they have paid the dues. But these workers can stay in the city without payment." said Rohit Bisht, a member of AICCTU Karnataka.

Bewildered about how to manage expenses, the workers are currently staying in space provided by the sub-contractors and their food expenses are also being managed by them. Both Mahadeb and Nitai had joined the construction of the Ejipura Flyover in August and haven't received any payment since the start.

But, the root cause of the problem might not be tardiness in payments by the sub-contractors. The sub-contractors who hired these workers for various divisions are also complaining the same.

Some are borrowing and taking gold loans to keep the workers. "It's a big problem we have been facing with Simplex. The problem has existed since we started and they keep making promises of paying dues. For two months, I somehow borrowed and took loans to pay to retain workers but eventually had to let go of some of them. In our last interaction, they had promised to clear dues on Feb 20th and on that confidence I paid GST after taking a gold loan but still haven't received a single rupee" said the sub-contractor for Simplex, Maqsood Khan.

Rajkumar Gupta, sub-contractor for security guards said, "With 13 security guards under my belt, I have to pay at least Rs 2 lakh per month. Lastly, We received Rs 6 lakh 5 months ago. To retain our workers, we have been paying them by taking loans."

Khan added that other sub-contractors are planning to band up and go to the BBMP office on Monday to seek answers. "We have already submitted the application to the BBMP and Assistant Labour Commissioner. We have learnt that he has forwarded the application to the Circle Inspector. We will be following up next week," he said.

Bangalore Mirror

Ejipura Flyover contract scrapped

Govt cites tardiness, slow pace of work. It began in 2017 and is only 45% complete

On March 8, BM reported that the flyover contract was scrapped due to slow pace of work

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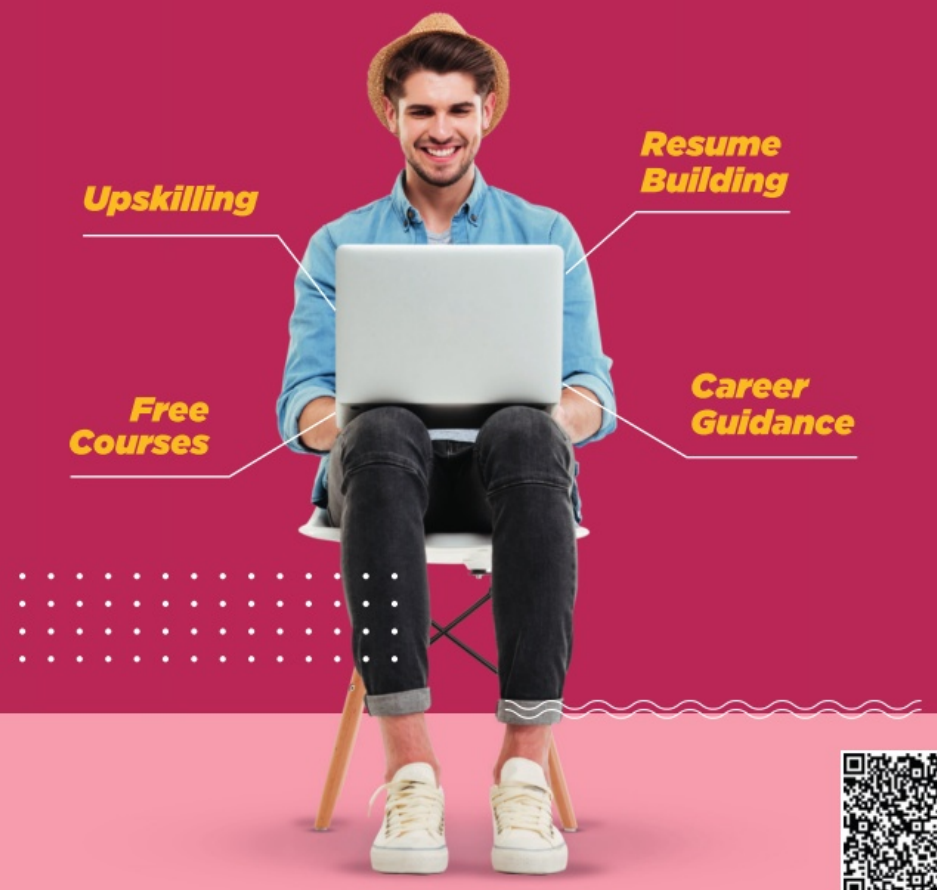

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Vax the dogs, please

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

we aware of the percentage of the total population that has received the rabies vaccine," said Dr Abi T Vanak of Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE). According to researchers, the lower level of rabies VNA may be due to a combination of host, vaccine and methodological factors. Time elapsed since vaccination, cold chain issues, a lack of stable vaccination programmes and vaccination failure are some of the reasons. Experts are of the view that given the scenario, re-immunisation is the need of the hour.

"The strategy for controlling dog-mediated rabies in the city has rarely been systematic. Vaccination programmes launched by the BBMP have been on and off for years now. Even by the civic body's estimates, we have not covered 50% of the total population with one dose at any given point in time. However, a single dose of vaccine can give immunity only for a year; the VNA level starts waning after that. This suggests the need for a simultaneous re-immunisation programme at a large scale," said Dr Vanak.

B'luru better off

While the city has a long way to go on the rabies eradication goal, it surely is faring well when compared to the other metropolitan cities in India.

An earlier study from Chandigarh observed that only 1% of street dogs there had adequate titres. Another sero-surveillance study from Mumbai showed an overall low prevalence of rabies antibodies in stray dogs (39.2%). A study from Chennai revealed an inadequate titre in 60% of vaccinated dogs.

"As compared to other metros in the country, Bengaluru is doing well. However, we need to work more in this direction. International organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) are looking at eradicating dog-mediated human rabies globally by 2030. India has come up with a national-level plan of 'One Health' network to eliminate rabies by 2030. While nothing can happen overnight, we are making slow and steady progress," Dr Isloor noted.

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Date of Walk In Interview 16.03.2022 (Wednesday)

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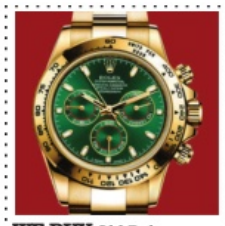

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I, Deempel J Velani D/o Jayanti H Patel, R/o Flat.101, Raj ratan nivas, 11-15, SLV layout, Bhattarahalli, Bengaluru 560049, have changed my name to DIMPLE J VELANI affidavit date 12/03/2022, notary Harisha.G, B'luru.

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ARE YOU INTO SWAP GAME?

EV users debating over battery swapping and plug-in charges

| Prakash VL
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With electric vehicles (EVs) picking up sales, the debate is on whether to swap batteries or use plug-in charge.

An alternative battery recharging method that is receiving global attention is battery swapping, in which a depleted EV battery is removed from the vehicle and replaced with a fully charged one.

Types of swapping

According to the handbook of electric vehicle charging infrastructure implementation released by NITI Aayog, there are two types of battery swapping.

As part of the manual process, batteries are placed and removed manually from the individual slots. Manual swapping stations are modular and occupy a minimal amount of space. In case of autonomous battery swapping, a robotic arm is used to swap batteries. Robotic swapping is used for four wheelers and e-bus applications as battery packs are larger and heavier, and require mechanical assistance.

These swapping stations are also more expensive and have a higher land requirement.

NITI Aayog had earlier released a handbook to guide state governments and local bodies to frame policies and norms towards setting up charging networks for electric vehicles.

The objective was to enhance charging infrastructure and facilitate a rapid transition to electric mobility in the country. The Handbook for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Implementation has been jointly developed by NITI Aayog, Ministry of Power (MoP), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), and World Resources Institute (WRI) India.

Advantages vs disadvantages

Battery swapping has some distinct advantages over plug-in charging. For example, EV recharging is completed in a short time. Batteries can be charged away from swapping points, allowing more freedom in setting up swap facilities. Reduction in upfront cost of EV, as battery ownership is replaced by battery leasing. Increased predictability of battery life due to controlled charging conditions.

However, there are several cons like lack of standardization among EV batteries, unsuitable battery pack design to enable ease of swapping (weight, dimensions and ergonomics), greater number of batteries needed to power same number of EVs, shorter commercial life of battery packs due to customer preference for new batteries with higher range, slow adoption of charging method by OEMs, higher costs of battery leasing over the life of the EV and higher GST on separate batteries (18 per cent) versus batteries sold with EV (5 per cent).

Current scenario

The report says, "At present battery swapping is considered a feasible solution for commercial EV fleets, especially in the e-2W and e-3W segments.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has allowed the sale and registration of EVs without batteries, which provides a huge boost to battery swapping solutions.

Further, industry stakeholders are making large investments in developing the battery swapping ecosystem. This indicates that battery swapping will emerge as a distinct part of EV charging networks in India in the coming years.

CHARGING POINT

Fuel hike: Conspiracy theories get field day

Some social media users suggest that soaring fuel prices in the United States aren't the result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and increased consumption or supply chain issues as daily-life resumes after two years of stagnation brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. Instead, the flurry of Facebook and Twitter posts offer, without evidence, that a nefarious scheme is underway: President Joe Biden's administration is intentionally driving up the price of gas to get more American drivers behind the wheel of an electric car. "$6.00 a gallon gas is how you get people to buy electric cars," claims one popular meme, shared thousands of times across Facebook and Instagram since Tuesday.

The claims about electric vehicles echo the core themes at the centre of several conspiracy theories peddled at the start of the covid-19 pandemic by followers of QAnon, a conspiracy theory that cast then-President Donald Trump as a hero fighting a cabal of elites who operate child sex trafficking rings.

The electric vehicle appears to be the latest reiteration of those conspiracy theories. Some social media posts have suggested that the government wants to push people to use electric vehicles so they can shut down a driver's car at will.

Contrary to that assertion, electric vehicles work similarly to gas-powered ones; the government cannot shut down individual vehicles at will. With electric cars, drivers can use public or at-home, private charging stations to recharge.

-- AP

Expect 'Indian Standard' charging soon

In years to come, there will be an 'Indian standard' for charging stations. This means cities, towns and villages in India will soon be able to benefit from an innovative low-cost electric vehicle (EV) charge point that can accelerate the adoption of electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers. The forthcoming 'Indian Standard' will allow a rapid scaling up of EV charging infrastructure that is much needed in the country.

Sources said that the objectives of India's Transformative Mobility programme for promoting EVs are to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and to reduce the dependence on import of crude oil.

The several initiatives taken by the NITI-Aayog (Mission for Transformative

Mobility and Battery Storage) and the launch of FAME-2 incentives are intended to stimulate the production and demand for EVs in India. Yet, the consumer adoption of EVs will also depend on the easy availability of EV charging infrastructure. Potential buyers must be confident of finding chargers for their vehicles when they are away from home.

If we compare EVs with Internal Combustion Engine (ICE), the share of ICE two-wheelers and three-wheelers is more than 84 pc of total vehicle sales in our country. Therefore, the fastest adoption of EVs is expected to be in two-wheelers and three-wheelers. By 2025, forecasts expect up to 4 million of such vehicles could be sold each year, growing to almost 10 million by 2030.

A committee involving all the key stakeholders including EV manufacturers, auto and electronic component suppliers, power utilities, and communication service providers has worked in fast-track mode to develop specifications, prototype products, and undertake testing and validation of the proposed standards.

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 # Good show! Indian women's hockey team
The Indian women's hockey team stunned World No.5 Germany 3-0 in shootout of FIH Pro League match

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Ukraine returnees: Plea in SC for medicos

Directions on issue of admission, continuation of education sought

#NEW DELHI

A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions on the issue of admission and continuation of studies in the country by Indian medical students who were recently evacuated from war-hit Ukraine.

The plea also sought directions to the Centre to provide a medical subject equivalency orientation programme for admitting them in the Indian curriculum.

The plea filed by advocate Rana Sandeep Bussa and others said that their writ petition seeks to invoke the most salient fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 - the protection of life and personal liberty.

Since the outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine and the return of students from Ukraine, multiple petitions are being filed in high courts and the Supreme Court seeking direction to the Centre to facilitate the continuation of studies of Indian medical students who have returned from Ukraine in domestic colleges.

A petition has also been filed by Pravasi Legal Cell before the Delhi High Court seeking direction to the Centre in this regard. The petition filed in the apex court says the Centre has done a tremendous job in bringing Indian students back home but they are being deprived of their fundamental right to education. It said the government has to step in and provide for the necessary integration of foreign medical students into the Indian medical curriculum.

"A lot of Indian students studying in Ukraine have been displaced from their medical universities and are forced and this war has caused the Indian medical students huge financial, mental, physical hardship including academic breakdown," the plea said. The plea said the National Medical Commission has allowed foreign medical graduates to complete their internship in India. **-PTI**

Indian nationals walk after deboarding from an IAF plane with evacuated people from war-hit Ukraine, upon its arrival at Hindan on Friday

Embassy in Ukraine to be relocated to Poland for now

#NEW DELHI

Considering the deteriorating security situation in Ukraine, the Indian Embassy in Kyiv, will be temporarily relocated in Poland, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Sunday.

The Ministry added that it is keeping an eye on the developments in Ukraine and the situation will be reassessed as per that.

"In view of the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Ukraine, including attacks in the western parts of the country, it has been decided that the Indian Embassy in Ukraine will be temporarily relocated in Poland. The situation will be reassessed in the light of further developments," read the MEA statement.

Russia launched a "military operation" in Ukraine on February 24, which it claimed was a response to calls from the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk for protection against attacks by Ukrainian troops.

The Russian Defense Ministry continues to maintain that the "special operation" is targeting Ukrainian military infrastructure only and the civilian population is not in danger. However, the West has refuted these claims and has imposed sanctions on Russia.

A number of countries including the US, Canada, and Australia have rolled out a comprehensive sanctions against Russia. **-ANI**

Till May 12, no need for Sebi nod to LIC IPO

#NEW DELHI

The government has time till May 12 to launch the initial public offering (IPO) of LIC without filing fresh papers with market regulator Sebi, an official said.

The government's sale of about 31.6 crore shares or 5 per cent stake in Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), which was estimated to fetch around Rs 60,000 crore to the exchequer, was originally planned to be launched in March, but the Russia-Ukraine crisis has derailed the plans as stock markets are highly volatile.

On February 13, the government filed the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) for the IPO with Sebi, which granted its approval for the same last week. "We have a window till May 12 to launch the IPO based on the papers filed with Sebi. We are watching the volatility and will file the RHP giving the price band soon," an official said.

The DRHP filed with Sebi had details of the financial results of LIC and also the embedded value till September 2021.

If the government misses the May 12 window available with it, LIC would have to file fresh papers with Sebi giving the results of December quarter and also update the embedded value.

LIC's embedded value, which is a measure of the consolidated shareholders value in an insurance company, was pegged at about Rs 5.4 lakh crore as of September 30, 2021, by international actuarial firm Milliman Advisors. Although the DRHP does not disclose the market valuation of LIC, as per industry standards it would about 3 times the embedded value. **PTI**

Logo of LIC is pictured at one of its offices in New Delhi

Chorus for Rahul as Cong president grows louder

#NEW DELHI

The chorus for making Rahul Gandhi Congress president again grew louder on Sunday as several leaders and workers voiced support for him to take on the mantle of party chief.

Ahead of a crucial Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said no one was taking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi as Gandhi does and was fighting resolutely. "The prime minister has to start his speech after targeting Rahul Gandhi, you can understand what this means. All of us want that Rahul ji should take on the mantle of party leadership," Gehlot told reporters.

He also hailed Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for resolutely fighting in Uttar Pradesh.

Karnataka Congress president D Shivakumar also backed the idea to make Gandhi the party chief.

"As I have said it earlier as well, Sh. Rahul Gandhi should take up the Congress presidency in a full time role immediately. This is the wish of millions of Congress workers like me," he tweeted. **-PTI**

Rahul Gandhi arrives at the AICC office in New Delhi on Sunday

China wrestles to rein in worst covid outbreak in 2 years

#BEIJING

China placed all 17 million residents in one of its biggest cities under lockdown on Sunday, as virus cases doubled nationwide to nearly 3,400 and anxiety mounted over the resilience of its 'zero-Covid' approach in the face of the worst outbreak in two years.

WORLD

The southern tech hub of Shenzhen told all residents to stay at home as the city struggles to eradicate an Omicron flare-up linked to neighbouring virus-ravaged Hong Kong.

The lockdown and a suspension of public transport will last until March 20, a city government notice said, adding that it would launch three rounds of mass testing.

The move extends an earlier lockdown imposed on the city's central business district.

Shenzhen reported 66 new infections on Sunday -- a fraction of the 32,430 confirmed the same day in Hong Kong.

"If prevention and control is not strengthened in a timely and decisive manner, it could easily become large-scale community transmission," Shenzhen health official Lin Hancheng said at a briefing.

The surge in infections across China has also prompted authorities to close schools in Shanghai and lock down multiple northeastern cities, as 18 provinces battle clusters of the Omicron and Delta variants.

China, where the virus was first detected in late 2019, has maintained a strict 'zero-Covid' policy enforced with swift lockdowns, travel restrictions and mass testing when clusters have emerged.

But the latest flare-up, driven by the highly transmissible Omicron variant and a spike in asymptomatic cases, is testing that approach.

Shanghai has so far been spared a citywide order to stay home, but individual housing compounds were being locked down as the megacity ramped up efforts to contain infections and test suspected close contacts. Jilin -- the city at the centre of the outbreak in the northeast -- was partially locked down Saturday, while residents of Yanji, an urban area of nearly 700,000 bordering North Korea, were also confined to their homes Sunday. **—AFP**

Workers set up beds to convert an exhibition centre into a makeshift hospital, following the covid outbreak in Changchun, Jilin province

HEALTH TIP: Honey is highly effective in treating cough in children. To treat common cold, take a tablespoon of honey, crushed ginger and tulsi for immediate relief

Methanol in mint can act as a decongestant and help to breathe better when consumed during a cold

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Penning purposes

Ever thought of learning calligraphy? Artist says it has various benefits and is worth considering

Whenever people think of calligraphy, they always think, "Oh, it's some sort of fancy writing." Calligraphy, however, is not just about beautiful handwriting, the art goes much deeper than that. For one, it helps relieve stress. It also improves concentration and stimulates creativity, apart from helping to develop fine motor skills. Being able to create beautiful lettering can help you to feel better and confident. Pooja Bhagwat, Founder of Ink n Bliss, a calligraphy and design studio, elaborates further.

It can be a form of mediation

Bhagwat says whenever she sits to do calligraphy, she forgets everything that's on her mind and feels like she is transported to a different planet.

"At the time, for me, only my ink, my creativity and the paper exist... It is deeply meditative and relaxing. With each and every stroke you create, your attention and focus moves further into what you are doing. Owing to that concentration, your mind starts to forget the other problems. Calligraphy forces us to slow down, focus and breathe. It helps relieve stress and feel relaxed," Bhagwat says.

Gift of gratitude

Bhagwat recalls as a child she would always enjoy everything that came her way, but as she got older, circumstances often got the better of her. This led to stress and she felt as though she was enveloped by negativity.

Bhagwat says, "This can lead to losing our belief in love and humanity. When you start your day writing a beautiful letter to a loved one – parents, partners, kids, siblings, friends – engaging in your calligraphy skills, you will have a sense of gratitude."

Bhagwat recently penned a heartfelt letter for someone using her artistic skills. A husband wanted to get something penned for his 81-year-old wife.

"It moved me. I keep reading and writing beautiful sentiments of people and see their urge to convey their feelings to their loved ones in the most beautiful ways. It helps me believe more in the goodness of people," she says.

Connecting dots

We have all experienced writing with pen on paper at some point in our lives. Although we are powered with smartphones and other devices, personally written notes help us connect with people faster.

Bhagwat says, "This is especially true for me during live events when people see me writing, they initiate conversations out of curiosity. Many mention how they miss the handwritten touch. So why wait until you miss it so much? Get up and start writing beautifully today!"

Leaves a lasting impression

Calligraphy, like so many other forms of art, can be therapeutic and healing. It can really leave an impression on both the artist and the receivers of the art piece.

"Calligraphy is a whole lot of fun for me, besides the fact that it brings joy to the people I do it for. It's a lovely way to create something meaningful for others. People will know that you have spent some time making drafts and writing their names. The gesture will remain with them for a long time to come. In today's digital world with people being lost in messages, updates and emails that little gesture of an artistically handwritten note will stand out. They will be excited and treasure it," Bhagwat says.

Learning calligraphy is absolutely worth it. If you felt excited reading the benefits of it, perhaps it's your turn to put pen to paper now.

— Femina

MIRRORLIGHTS

Glycerin and skincare

Glycerin is a prominent ingredient in the formulation of a plethora of products and many also prefer using it as is, sans any dilution. But why is it so popular among skincare junkies?

"Glycerin, also known as glycerol, is a naturally occurring compound derived from vegetable or animal fats. It is a clear, colourless, odourless, syrupy liquid with a sweet flavour," says Dr Niketa Sonavane, celebrity dermatologist and founder, Ambrosia Aesthetics.

Glycerin is a humectant meaning it's capable enough to trap moisture in the skin.

"Glycerin is commonly used in skin care products with occlusives, another type of moisturising agent, to trap the moisture that it draws into the skin," says Dr Sonavane.

"Because of its ability to smooth and moisturise skin, it is a common ingredient in many beauty and skincare products," she adds.

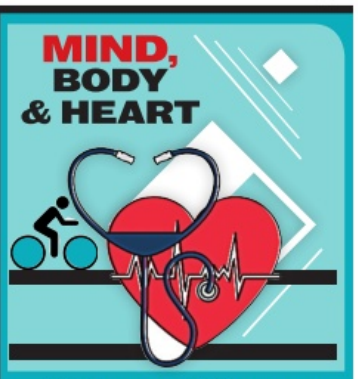
The gentle soothing ingredient works hard to keep your skin baby soft, by preventing TEWL (transepidermal water loss).

Dr Sonavane says, "Glycerin hydrates the skin's outer layer (stratum corneum), enhances the skin barrier function and mechanical properties, provides defence against skin irritants and also accelerates the healing of wounds. It also has antimicrobial properties, which means it can keep harmful microorganisms at bay."

You can use glycerin as a moisturiser, but because it is thick, using only glycerin on your face may not be a good idea. It attracts dust, which can clog pores and cause acne and pimples. Additionally, as a humectant, draws water from the nearest source. The lower levels of your skin are the closest source of water, especially in low humidity conditions.

"This can cause the skin to become dehydrated, even to the point of blistering. It should always be diluted. Before applying it to your face, dilute it with a floral hydrosol or rose water," explains Dr Sonavane.

–Ria Bhatia



All problems solved

Dear Coleen

I'm in a really difficult situation with one of my best friends. Our husbands were good friends, too, until recently when they fell out over a joint business venture that went horribly wrong. My husband blamed him and, to be fair, I think it was down to my friend's husband, who made some bad decisions. We've lost money as a result and we don't really have a lot of it to lose!
My problem is that I value my friendship with his wife and don't want us to fall out over it. But is it possible to be as close when our husbands are at loggerheads?
I feel bad for my husband as he put his heart and soul into the project and feels very angry and let down. What do you think?

COLEEN SAYS

I think it will be difficult, to be honest. You could address it head on and talk about how you could keep your friendship going and not let their dispute affect it.
Discuss whether it's possible and if you could have an agreement not to talk about them or what happened.
The problem might come when you see your husband stressed and upset, and it starts to have a financial impact on your family.
Your husband might also ask where your loyalty lies. And you might find it hard not to bring it up with her or tell him things that she's said. As adults, we should be able to separate a business venture from a friendship, but it's difficult. Perhaps you just need some cooling off time – so you stay in touch but don't see each other. If this breakdown has only recently happened you need some time for the dust to settle.

—Coleen Nolan, Daily Mirror

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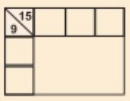
SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

329 : 15
746 : 34
698 : ?

Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



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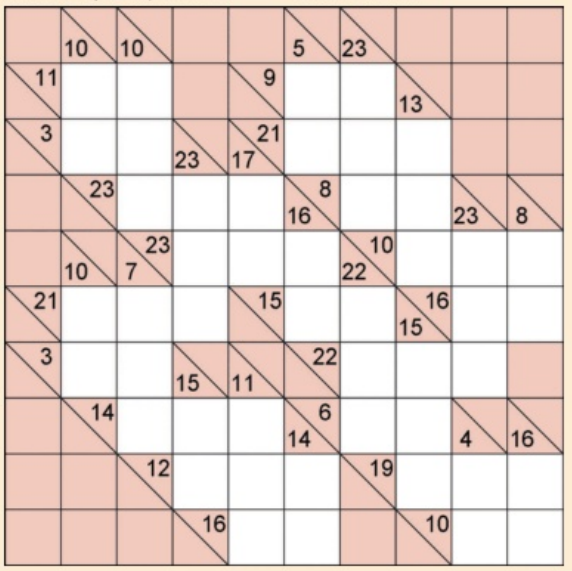

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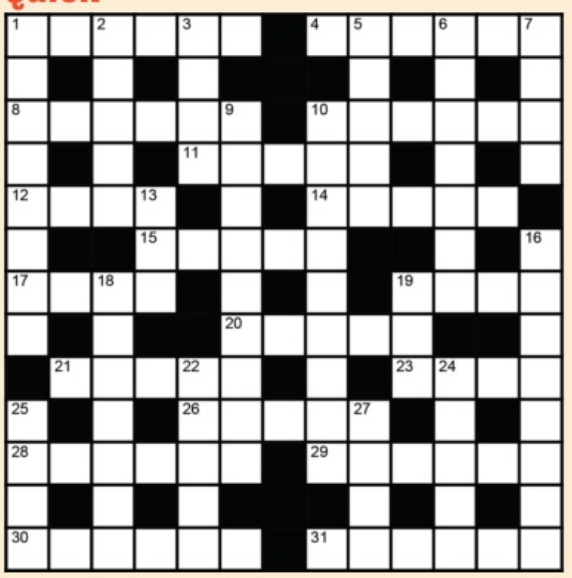


ACROSS

1 Relating to the stars (6)
4 Breakfast table item, should we say? (3-3)
8 Diminish the light (6)
10 Clown in the king's court? (6)
11 Duty rosters (5)
12 Cupid's alias (4)
14 12 month periods (5)
15 Subarctic forest (5)
17 Snug and warm (4)
19 Author Hubbard (1,3)
20 Call at sea to stop (5)
21 Beastly nose (5)
23 Of Indian or local origin (4)
26 Majestic (5)
28 Surpassed; got the better of (6)
29 French stew (6)
30 From the soil? (6)
31 Orderliness or regular habits (6)

DOWN

1 Hearing (8)
2 Human trunk (5)
3 Maple genus ? (4)
5 Silly ones (5)
6 Provision supplier (7)
7 Skin hole (4)
9 Proposed (9)
10 Area home to the City Central Library (9)
13 Pig's dwelling (3)
16 Maintained (8)
18 American politician (7)
19 Limited in short? (3)
22 Dickensian Heep (5)
24 Historic period (5)
25 Unemployment pay (4)
27 Put on cargo (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: D EQUALS G

ZYEP JX AVGKD Y UYBPVE GB FVYEKGKD TJI PJ BGKD GK KJAJML VFBV'B SJGQV AOP LJOE JIK.

Linemaro

You have an awesome sense of humour

Mindchow

Anyone who says they have only one life to live must not know how to read a book

Joke of the day

Q: How would you lift a giraffe with one hand? A: Doesn't matter as you won't find any one handed giraffe

Loop

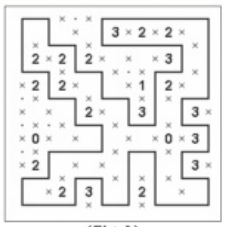
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

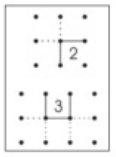
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)

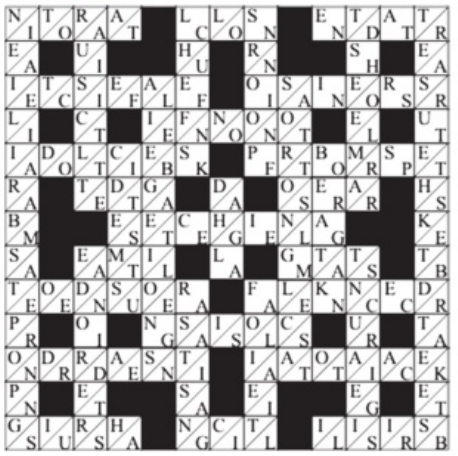


(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed

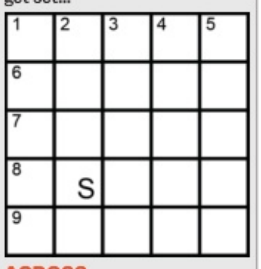
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 Dam am; 6 O Mage; 7 Arils; 8 Tessa; 9 Smile

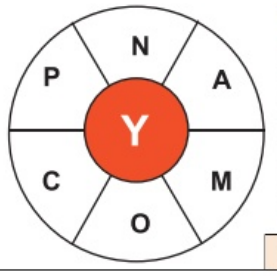
DOWN

1 Moll a; 2 Masai; 3 Dimes; 4 Eagre; 5 Mt Ass

Mensa puzzle

Which row is the odd one out?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

03 Average; 04 Good; 05 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

2				8	1		7	
8				5		4		
	6	9	4					
6				7		2		
7			9		2			3
		5		1				8
					8	3	4	
		2		9				7
	4		7	6				9

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

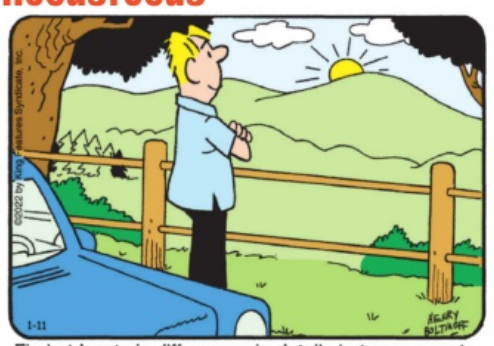
Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 3
1 3 9 9

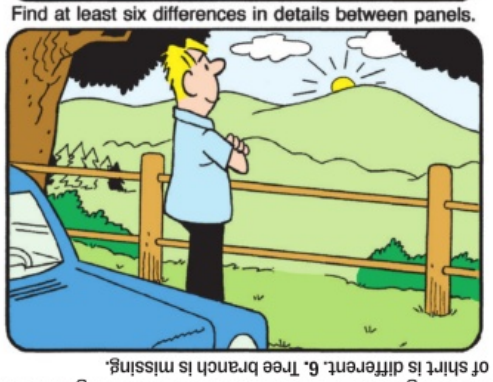
Medium = 19
1 3 7 8

Hard = 17
2 7 8 6

Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



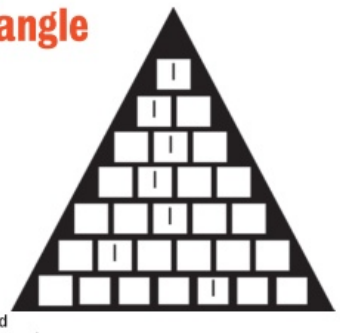
Differences: 1. Sun is smaller. 2. Fence post is taller. 3. Headlight is different. 4. Side mirror is missing. 5. Bottom of shirt is different. 6. Tree branch is missing.

Riddler

Round as a dishpan, deep as a tub Still the oceans can't fill me up. What am I?

Alpha triangle

1 Third vowel
2 Not out
3 Fall from grace
4 Indication
5 Looks happy
6 Mr. in Milan
7 Stirring



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Redeye by Mel Casson

Bizarrotrip

You will awaken as satisfied customers and register for a series of follow-up seminars.
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Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

Crankshaft

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
You may not able to present yourself in practical way. You may feel dull, which may give you a lack of confidence. Follow your intuition while taking decisions in terms of investment. Those around you may not be cooperative when it comes to routine work. You are advised to be careful and avoid eating unhealthy food to avoid stomach issues.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, you may be busy with the your family and friends. You may plan to renovate your house and may bring creative stuff home to maintain your social status, which may boost your prestige. You may expect an increase in your fixed assets.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today is a positive day, in terms of gains. You may get results with less effort. Your losses may convert into profits with the help of your wisdom. You may plan for higher studies to boost your career. You may donate some amount to a religious place or charity. You may also help a needy person. It may be possible to invest in intellectual assets. Students may do better.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today you may feel dull and may suffer some health-related issues. Chronic diseases may reappear. You are advised to avoid rash driving and hurrying. Avoid conflicts with your business partner and avoid making important decisions in terms of business. Investments in business or work may be postponed. With blessings from elders, by the late evening, things may be under control.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, you may be blessed by your destiny and postponed projects may start now. With the help of elders' blessings, messy situations will now be under control. This may speed up your project. Disputes between family members may be resolved, which may boost domestic harmony. Your creativity may improve. You may be attracted by glamour.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, is a good day. You are enthusiastic. With the help of a good focus, you may perform well on the business and work front. Your boss may be supportive and you may receive new responsibilities in terms of a promotion. You may visit a religious place. Avoid arrogance in your love life.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, you are blessed by the moon. Your destiny is with you and postponed projects are likely to start now. You may have elders' blessings, which may help you to come out of messy situations. This may boost your speed at work. Domestic harmony may make you happy after resolving some disputes between family members. Your creativity may grow now.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Your moon is not in a good position and you may feel dull and have health issues. You may face losses in this period. Do not invest in risky assets. Your gains may convert to losses. Stop investing in worthless objects. You should avoid being involved in controversies, otherwise it may pull you down negatively.

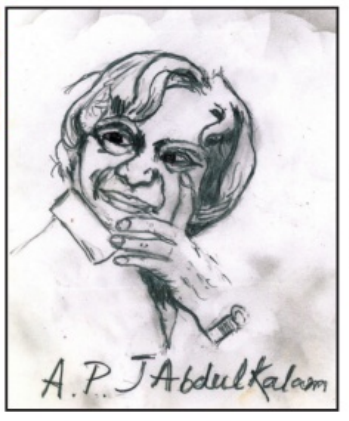
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, you are blessed by the moon. Love is in the air. Singles may find suitable matches. You may do better in terms of your professional life. Your friends and subordinates may support you.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, you may have confidence which may reflect in your way of working. You are in a winning position in terms of opponents and enemies. Your focus on your goals may be good. Health issues may get resolved. In your domestic life, try to avoid unnecessary arguments, it may affect harmony.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
You, may be happy due to blessings from an auspicious planetary combination. You may have some sort of positive energy which may develop your prestige in your circles. You may spend your time to study intellectual stuff. You will also plan for higher studies.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, you may feel negative vibes around you, which may make you unhappy. You are advised to avoid investing in worthless assets. You may also notice that friends and those around you may not be supportive. You are advised to not to expect more from anyone in terms of help, otherwise it may make you nervous. It is advised to take independent decisions today.

KIDZONE



Shreya Soundarya S, 8 years, Bengaluru

Srisha Bhatia, 6 years, DPS Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No.4, KSCCF Compound, Pampa Maha Kavi Road, Chamrajpet, Bengaluru 560 018; Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
3 x 2 + 9 = 15
7 x 4 + 6 = 34
6 x 9 + 8 = 62

BULL'S EYE
canopy, COMPANY, copy, many, pony

RIDDLER
A sieve

STRIKE OUT

N	O	R	A	C	O	S
E	U		U	N	H	E
L	T	I	F	N	O	T
I	T	S	E	L	F	O
A	D	L	I	B	S	P
E	T	A	P	A	O	R
R	O	N	A	I	L	S
T	E	N	S	O	R	F
S	A	M	I	A	G	A
M	E	T	C	H	I	N
R	E	T	A	P	A	O
A	D	L	I	B	S	P
T	S	E	L	F	O	S
L	T	I	F	N	O	T
E	U		U	N	H	E
N	O	R	A	C	O	S

FAST FIVE

M	A	D	A	M
O	M	E	G	A
L	A	I	R	S
A	S	S	E	T
L	I	M	E	S

QUOTE UNCODE
Part of being a Master is learning how to sing in nobody else's voice but your own.

QUICK

E	A	R	T	H	Y	
L	O		A		D	C
O	U	T	D	I	D	
D		A		R	E	G
S	N	O	U	T		G
E		E		A	V	A
C	O	S	Y		N	
N		T	A	I	G	A
E	R	O	S		M	
I		S		R	O	T
D	A	R	K	E	N	
U		O		C		E

MENSA PUZZLE
D. Apart from D, each row contains one figure with one stroke, one with two strokes, one with three strokes, one with four strokes and one with five strokes. In row D there are two figures with four strokes.

SUDOKU

2	3	4	6	8	1	9
8	1	7	2	5	9	4
5	6	9	4	3	7	1
6	9	3	8	7	5	2
4	2	5	3	1	6	7
9	7	6	5	2	8	3
3	5	2	1	9	4	8
7	8	1	9	4	2	6
1	4	8	7	6	3	5

ALPHA TRIANGLE
I, In, Sin, Sign, Grins, Signor, Rousing.

GO FIGURE
Easy
9 + 3 x 1 - 9 = 3
8 + 7 + 1 + 3 = 19
Hard
6 x 8 / 2 - 7 = 17

LOOP

KAKURO

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Live large

Actor Kriti Sanon says she doesn't believe that Bollywood has reduced making larger-than-life 'masala' entertainers as it is an extremely audience-friendly genre which ensures big box office pull. According to Sanon, the perception that Hindi cinema has distanced itself from commercial potboilers became stronger in the last two years when Bollywood didn't witness any major theatrical release due to the pandemic.

Her latest action-comedy "Bachchhan Paandey", fronted by Akshay Kumar, is now being billed by the trade as the film which will revive the big scale hindi movie genre.

"I don't think we have stopped making those big, commercial entertainers, it is just that we haven't had those many releases. There is a lineup of films, all blockbuster potential, waiting to come. We feel like that because in that short period of time, few South films that came and made a mark, which was fantastic. "These films do really well, they clock in huge numbers as there is a huge audience for it. So, as long as the audience is there, these films won't ever go out of style, they will keep getting made," Sanon told PTI.

While Bollywood just had one bonafide hit last year, the big scale actioner "Sooryavanshi" also headlined by Kumar, Tamil and Telugu films saw the humongous success of "Master" and "Pushpa". Within three months, several big ticket films from South have already released, including "Valimai", "Bheemla Nayak", "Radhe Shyam". Next in the queue are SS Rajamouli's "RRR", set to release on March 25, and much-awaited "KGF Chapter 2".

The 31-year-old actor said the market has opened for all films in India and she doesn't view it as several industries "competing" with each other. "It is a healthy time for all. Today a lot of bilingual, trilingual films are being made which earlier wasn't the case. Technicians would still work across the industries, many of them during my first film were from the South. But for actors it's happening now, which is great," she added. **PTI**

'Liberated' by OTT

Actor Suchitra Pillai says the arrival of streaming platforms in the country has been a "breath of fresh air" for her as the medium has offered her diverse roles, something she struggled with on television. The actor, known for starring in films like "Dil Chahta Hai", "Page 3" and "Fashion", has appeared on several TV shows including "Pradhan Mantri", "Koi Dil Main Hai" and "Beintehaa". She has also been a regular in the digital space with shows like "Betaal", "Call My Agent: Bollywood" and the streamer's latest series "Eternally Confused and Eager for Love".

Plliai said OTT (over-the-top) platforms have liberated her from being bracketed as an actor.

"The advent of OTT has been incredible. As an actor, to be able to get a lot of things where you are not typecast (is nice). I have done a lot of TV before and there had come a point where everyone was saying, 'Oh, again you are playing a negative role?' This is my third show with and each role has been different, it has been like a breath of fresh air," the actor told PTI.

From playing a commandant of her squad in Counter Insurgency Police Department to a mother in her latest young adult dramedy series, Pillai said the roles that streamers have offered her are a departure from what she was used to doing on the small screen.

"An actor is always greedy to do something they haven't done before and with platforms like this, you get that chance. I haven't seen stereotypical characters on OTT platforms, I haven't been offered a bad mother in law or a bad aunt, which is why I am enjoying this, it's not at all boring. I haven't been typecast at all," she added. **— PTI**

Sunny on the balancing act

Sunny Leone who is occupied with her upcoming projects and enjoying the success of her latest web series 'Anamika', says as her work pressure is increasing, finding a balance between professional commitment and parenthood is becoming tougher for her.

While she believes that playing the title role in 'Anamika' has given her a chance to showcase her skill as an actor, she mentioned how her three children have become so emotionally attached to her during the lockdown period that leaving them home for work gives her separation anxiety at times.

Sunny told IANS: "It is so hard for me to balance work life and motherhood especially because I am one of those moms who is involved in every daily activity of my children. Since the pandemic when they were growing up in last 2 years they have all their time with us, now every time when I and my husband go out for work, they would just feel so upset...sit on our lap and cuddle up saying, 'just play with us, don't go away'. When we heard those words coming from those cute voices, it breaks our heart really."

Sunny has three children - a daughter Nisha adopted in 2017, twin boys - Asher and Noah via surrogacy in 2018.

Currently, she is working on south Indian films - 'Rangeela', 'Shero', 'Oh My Ghost'. She is also working on Hindi film 'Koka Kola', 'Helen' **—IANS**

If role is substantial, Yami is game

Yami Gautam Dhar is currently in an interesting phase of her career. She already has quite a few content-driven films like 'Vicky Donor', 'Badlapur', 'Kaabil' and 'Uri: The Surgical Strike' in her kitty. The actor currently has five projects waiting for their release. But, it doesn't mean she will accept any role that comes her way.

Speaking to a portal, Yami insisted that she has evolved as a professional over the years. She has now realised the difference between what will work for her and what she needs to do because that's what works. The actor also says not only the opportunities but her own perspective have changed a lot. Despite receiving so much advice the 33-year-old believes that one has to learn from his/her own experiences. About her, Yami adds she's glad it came to a point where she was offered such roles and scripts and got an opportunity to work with certain directors who believed that she could pull off these characters. The whole idea is that you pick up projects that your heart prompts you to, she said. **—IANS**